

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Business Alliance: Planning for Business and Community Partnerships

MONOGRAPH

Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Programs

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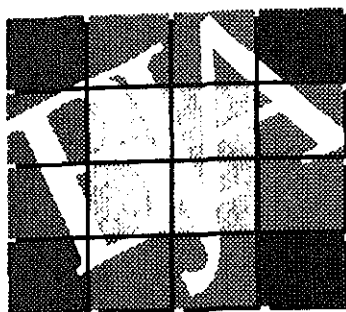
- Comprehensive approaches to community partnerships and prevention.
- Violence prevention.
- Adjudication, community prosecution, and diversion.
- Boot camps, intermediate sanctions, and diversion.
- Improvements in the functioning of the criminal justice system.

which provides support to State and local enforcement agencies to deal with uncommon situations; the Regional Information Sharing Systems program, which shares intelligence and coordinates efforts against criminal networks that operate in many locations across jurisdictional lines; and the Public Safety Officers Benefits Program, which provides financial benefits for survivors of officers killed in the line of duty and for officers permanently and totally disabled in the line of duty.

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- Mail: P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850.
- Visit: 1600 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850.
- Telephone: 800-698-4252



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**Bureau of Justice Assistance
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Introduction

The Business Alliance program was started in late 1992 to help disadvantaged communities improve economic self-sufficiency and stimulate entrepreneurship. A Business Alliance is a voluntary organization of individuals and businesses that band together to promote the commercial, financial, economic, and civic interests of a community. Formed by the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the original Business Alliance pilot programs were developed as part of Operation Weed and Seed, under grants from the U.S. Department of Justice. Provided that each community would match the grants, five Florida communities were awarded \$10,000 each to test the Business Alliance concept as an element of the neighborhood restoration component of Weed and Seed.

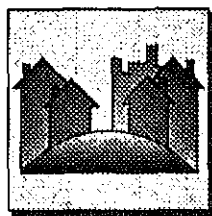
Since late 1991, Operation Weed and Seed has offered a comprehensive approach to urban revitalization in the United States. The goal of Weed and Seed is to "weed out" violent crime, drug use, and gang activity from inner-city neighborhoods and to prevent crime from returning by "seeding in" a variety of public and private efforts to strengthen a community.

Neighborhood restoration under the Weed and Seed strategy contains two basic components:

To stabilize target neighborhoods by eliminating or reducing crime, drug trafficking, vacant buildings, and other factors that hurt the quality of life.

To promote revitalization strategies designed to (1) attract more businesses and reduce unemployment through increased job opportunities, (2) improve a community's physical condition and appearance, (3) improve housing conditions and demand, and (4) develop job training and business assistance programs.

Operation Weed and Seed has succeeded in stabilizing neighborhoods as well as fighting crime and drugs in communities because residents have cared and banded together with community leaders and law enforcement officials to



A Business Alliance is a voluntary organization of individuals and businesses that band together to promote the commercial, financial, economic, and civic interests of a community.

Community policing is essential for attracting economic enterprises through which the community, law enforcement, and business can support revitalization efforts.

Any community involved in planning for revitalization can use the Business Alliance concept without implementing the full Business Alliance strategy; however, such planning must ensure that neighborhoods are safe environments in which businesses can be reestablished. Community policing is essential for attracting economic enterprises through which the community, law enforcement, and business can support revitalization efforts.

Business Alliances are designed to help existing businesses in distressed communities attract new jobs, and provide increased training opportunities for business owners and residents.

The Business Alliance program takes advantage of the flexibility of the private sector and provides a way for the business community to create mutually beneficial partnerships. These partnerships reflect the unique perspectives of a business community and the perspectives of business owners who are directly affected by revitalization efforts and whose participation is critical. The Business Alliance brings together public officials, business groups and individuals who are enthusiastic about fostering change in their communities. Among other things, it is a citizen voice, a representative voice at the local levels of government, an information source, and a research and promotional organization.

This monograph draws upon the experiences of the Business Alliance programs as well as strategies for traditional economic development. It is a guide for communities that want to develop economic revitalization based on their capacities, skills, and assets.

Organization of This Monograph

The foregoing overview of Business Alliances sets the stage for the *Business Alliance: Planning for Business and Community Development*. Chapter 1, "Getting Started," covers the desired qualities of members and leaders, the characteristics of projects that can be successful, and identification of local power magnates as well as other stakeholders. Chapter 2, "Assessing Economic Needs," outlines general principles and 12 specific steps that, if followed, should help produce an accurate assessment of a neighborhood's economic needs. Chapter 3, "Economic Consensus," focuses on using the results of the assessment to reach Business Alliance goals. Chapter 4, "Executing the Plan," discusses goals, objectives, and the importance of community participation. Chapter 5, "Business Alliance functions and achievements." Chapter 5, "A World of Ideas," describes six tactics that could each be used to achieve a neighborhood's economic revival. Chapter 6, "Considering the Future," details the strategies used in five Florida communities in the arduous process of rescuing neighborhoods in decline. Appendix A lists of publications and organizations that can provide more information about the topic of Business Alliances.

Getting Started

The Business Alliance program helps community leaders and business owners design and implement an action plan to meet community needs. The overall goal of the program is to harness existing and outside resources to revitalize stagnant or deteriorating neighborhoods that have already adopted the Weed and Seed strategy.

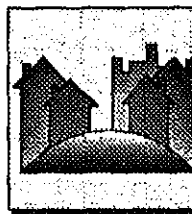
Each Alliance should tailor its objectives to meet the needs, abilities, and concerns of the residents and businesses it serves. Generally, these objectives include creating jobs, increasing the availability of capital, assisting small businesses and young entrepreneurs, and attracting new businesses.

Considering the Basics

Forming Action Groups

The backbone of a Business Alliance is the action group, which may be called a council, a task force, or a committee. An action group has clearly defined tasks designed to accomplish the program's goals and objectives. The needs of the neighborhood and policies of the Business Alliance determine the number of action groups, which may include any of the following:

- **Coordinating or steering group.** Acting as an informal board of directors only during the formative stage of the program, the steering group establishes and guides other work groups, sets timetables and goals, and holds elections of permanent directors and officers at the earliest opportunity. The elected board interviews and hires necessary employees and completes the work started by the steering group.
- **Bylaws group.** The bylaws group drafts the bylaws, the articles of incorporation, and the charter of a Business Alliance, receiving input from other work groups as needed. The steering group also applies for an Internal Revenue Service letter of exemption.
- **Finance and budget group.** Establishing the amount of initial seed money



*"Start from the
up and work like
of a gun."
—Fats Waller,*

- Program and objectives planning group. Outlining projects, and programs, the planning group estimates how much money will be needed to finance a Business Alliance program.
- Membership recruitment group. The recruitment group promotes the advantages of an Alliance as well as attracts new members.
- Administrative group. The administrative group establishes personnel procedures, job descriptions, salary needs, and so on. The group also selects office sites and furnishings, coordinates with a bookkeeping and money-handling group, and estimates how much money will be needed for operations.

Membership in an Alliance

Any business or individual sharing a common interest in a community is eligible for membership in an Alliance. Eligibility is usually spelled out in the Alliance bylaws. Fees, subscriptions, and other contributions, if determined to be necessary, are set by the Alliance board.

Financing an Alliance

Financed on a voluntary basis, the Business Alliance depends on contributions from among its members, who consist of businesses and individuals. The Alliance should also, however, develop the ability to obtain grants from State sources to help administer a program.

In most cases, a Business Alliance will first need to be financially sponsored by a Weed and Seed Steering Committee or a community development organization (i.e., a local Chamber of Commerce). Because these organizations are stakeholders in the future success of the Alliance, it would be advisable to ensure that key staff within those organizations are kept informed of any and all major decisions and initiatives of the Alliance.

Hierarchy of an Alliance

Business Alliances are run by a board of directors elected by the members. The board, which serves without being paid, sets the policies and oversees the operation. When the Alliance can afford the salary of a staff person, it may hire an executive director—who may also be referred to as the president—at a salary set by the board; the executive director hires other employees. In smaller neighborhood Business Alliances, the executive director may be either a volunteer or a part-time employee.

Executive Director

Selecting a committee that will best identify the economic needs of a neighborhood and develop programs to meet those needs.

Ensuring that the internal structure of the Alliance can effectively anticipate, identify, and solve the economic problems of a community.

Motivating and inspiring volunteers to creative and fruitful action.

Developing, through the proper committee, a budget for the Alliance and relating that budget to program goals.

Maintaining membership at a level that will allow an Alliance to successfully complete its initiatives.

Hiring, supervising, and training staff so that the operations of the Alliance are maintained at top efficiency.

Ensuring that policies established by the Alliance board are properly recorded in meeting minutes; assisting volunteers in preparation of statements on positions concerning public issues.

Locating, designing, and maintaining office space that presents an attractive "front door" for the use of Alliance members, the community, and visitors.

Addressing, continuously and consistently, the economic needs of a community.

Careful Consideration of Projects

Business Alliance designs its activities to meet community needs; projects are undertaken only after being thoroughly analyzed for value and importance. Such analysis might consist of answering questions like the following:

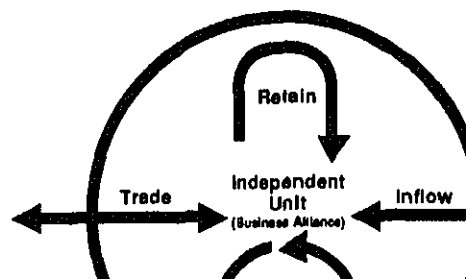
Does the project regard the community as an independent economic unit? Economic development efforts can be dissipated easily unless the community is dealt with as a self-contained unit (see figure 1).

Does the project increase the flow of money into the community? Developing economies require outside money and credit to "prime the pump" of economic growth.

Does the project retain funds in the community as long as possible? Self-sufficiency depends on community residents investing cash locally.

Does the project circulate funds rapidly and continuously? The more often money turns over within a community, the better the cash flow and the better the opportunity to invest more in the community.

Figure 1 The Community as an Independent Economic



A Business Alliance can establish its action plan through an informal goal-setting program agreed upon by its members or through a formal needs assessment survey conducted in a targeted community.

Business Alliances can become involved in activities from economic development, community development, human resources, and public affairs and legislation.

Economic development projects may include retail activities, wholesale activities, industrial development, and services for minorities. Community development projects may include education, cultural needs assessment, downtown redevelopment, crime prevention, public relations, transportation, and urban planning. Human resources development projects may include job training, recreation, and health care. Public affairs projects and legislative activities may include political effectiveness courses, economic understanding programs, studies, business-consumer relations, and high school and college business symposiums.

Making It Happen

As described in the previous subsection, the key to starting a Business Alliance is organizing a group of community leaders who will provide the initial force. Potential leaders of a Business Alliance can be found in the community with Weed and Seed steering committees. Once established, a Business Alliance must coordinate its work with those steering committees. Specific activities of a Business Alliance depend on local needs. The Alliance's mission is determined by the goals or action plans developed by its members.

A Business Alliance can establish its action plan through an informal goal-setting program agreed upon by its members or through a formal needs assessment survey conducted in a targeted community.

The Florida Prototype

The Cocoa Beach, Winter Park, Clearwater, Manatee County, and St. Johns County, Florida, Chambers of Commerce served as sponsoring organizations for the Business Alliance pilot programs. Each Chamber designated a full-time or a part-time employee to organize and manage the Business Alliance program and work with business owners, community leaders, and law enforcement to launch the programs. (See chapter 5 for more in-depth details of the five programs.)

The membership of the Cocoa Beach Business Alliance grew to over 100 businesses and individuals in less than a year. In that time, the Business Alliance identified problems in a specific downtown business district believed to need immediate attention. Members agreed that the cooperation between business owners and local police needed improvement. The street conditions in the business district.

worked with city officials to initiate a major street beautification project for the business district scheduled to begin in 1994.

As word about its activities spread, the Cocoa Beach Area Business Alliance encountered more interest in the program by businesses outside the targeted neighborhood; as a result, the Alliance was designated a citywide organization. The Business Alliance is laying the groundwork for a long-term economic action plan by conducting small-business assistance seminars and developing a program to encourage local businesses to hire more people who live in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Organizing Checklists for Business Alliances

The essential elements of a successful Business Alliance program include sound organizational structure, definitive objectives, participating members, adequate finances, responsible leadership, and skilled administrative staff. It is also recommended that a Business Alliance produce and maintain documents that detail the following:

- Bylaws (see appendix B for a model).
- Job descriptions (officers, directors, and committee heads).
- Organizational structure.
- Program of work that includes plans of action, data on active projects, objectives, and goals.
- Annual reports, including summaries of yearly accomplishments distributed to Alliance members and the public.
- Financial reports, including detailed budgets, monthly financial reports, and yearly audits.
- Meeting minutes, including records of the decisions and positions of the board and committees.

Tapping Into a Community's Power Structure

Although a Business Alliance is designed primarily to work in conjunction with an ongoing Weed and Seed initiative, an Alliance can also be a stand-alone operation. In either circumstance, organizing a Business Alliance requires that a steering committee identify true community leaders to approach as sources of support and commitment. If a Weed and Seed program is already under way, then that steering committee can perform this task.

Communities lacking the benefit of Operation Weed and Seed may wish to review the process for locating power figures described below before they organize a steering committee. This method of determining a community's

The essential elements of a successful Business Alliance program include sound organizational structure, definitive objectives, participating members, adequate finances, responsible leadership, and skilled administrative staff.

Creating a new initiative like a Business Alliance requires determination of the persons and organizations that wield power.

- **Position.** A person's title is the clue (for example, prescriptive officer).
- **Information.** A specialized profession is the clue (for example, attorney, certified public accountant, or professor).
- **Institution.** Size, exclusivity, or prestige are the indicators; any entity is important (for example, the Young Presidents' Organization is exclusive; or The Brookings Institution and the Hudson River Museum are prestigious).
- **Charisma or personality.** Leaders are neither always great nor always in high positions. Leaders can simply be well-respected individuals who have been instrumental in community development. Individuals with track records of success and achievement are anyone referred by the Weed and Seed Steering Committee. The Chamber of Commerce can be considered suitable.

The community evaluation process also involves identifying key individuals within a community and asking advisers for the names of community leaders. The best information can be obtained by completing the following steps:

- **Step 1:** List the three most significant community projects and the organizations involved in each of them—that were completed in the last 5 years.
- **Step 2:** List three major community projects that have failed and the reasons for the failures, and the key organizations that were involved in these projects.
- **Step 3:** List the nine most influential groups in a community.
- **Step 4:** Made up of the following eight substeps:
 - List five people who could be recommended to help develop a Business Alliance.
 - List a community's five most successful business owners.
 - List five people with the most political influence in a community.
 - List one recognized leader in each of the following professions: business, finance, law, medicine, accounting, and academia.
 - List one person recognized for a background in each of the following areas: public relations, fundraising, charitable activities, and the arts.
 - List five people (or organizations) who could stop a problem.
 - List the five most wealthy families in a community.
 - List the five most often mentioned young leaders.

list of major projects that have failed because that information will help determine which organizations in the community are willing to accept risk. The organizations and individuals whose names appear frequently in the answers to the exercise questions would be likely candidates for the initial steering group that will establish a Business Alliance.

Once steering group membership has been determined, consideration might also be given to how long each individual should serve. Even the most careful selection process cannot foresee conflict among personalities. Should the initial group not work well together, short terms in office would allow earlier review of the leadership and discussions of alternatives.

It may then be helpful to doublecheck the composition of the group to ensure that it is balanced—an important task that must be completed before anyone is asked to serve in a leadership position. Figure 2 shows how the members of one steering committee were categorized according to social and professional relationships, areas of expertise, geography, fields of professional endeavor(s), ethnicity, age, gender, and lengths of term in office. Such a breakdown could prove a useful tool in obtaining an accurate overview of the group. This task may also need to be repeated once it is known who has accepted and what additional positions must be filled.

Figure 2 Sample Form To Identify Composition of Group

Background	Names of Steering Group Members
Relations	City Leaders
	Neighborhood
	Media
	Expertise
Expertise	Public Relations
	Finances
	Fundraising
	Personnel
	Legal
	Program
Geography	Neighborhood
	City
	County
	At Large
Business Sector	Medical
	Professional
	International
	Manufacturing
	Hospitality
	Major Services
	Family Business
	Small Retail
Ethnicity	African American
	Asian
	Caucasian
	Hispanic
	Latina/Latino
	Native Alaskan
	Native American
	Other
Age	65+
	51-65
	36-50
	22-35
	18-21
Sex	Female

Assessing Economic Needs

One of the more important functions of a Business Alliance is to help the community focus on economic development needs. Although an overall community needs assessment may have been conducted as part of the Weed and Seed strategy, another assessment that is specific to economic development can be extremely helpful in identifying business concerns. An economic needs assessment can also communicate economic development needs from the Business Alliance to other companies or organizations that make up the overall business community within a city.

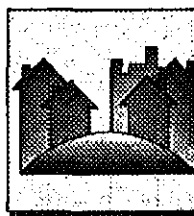
Although conducting an economic needs assessment may appear somewhat involved and time consuming, there are good reasons to conduct the assessment:

- The local business community will have a clearer picture of its specific problems and will be aware of the obstacles that must be removed before economic development issues can be addressed.
- Existing resources that can support a business strategy will be more easily identified.
- Detailed information about a neighborhood's economic makeup and businesses will usually be required before any money can be awarded, should the Business Alliance approach potential funding sources.
- Individuals who participate in the economic needs assessment often tend to be more committed and involved in developing solutions for the problems identified in the assessment.

An economic needs assessment can be broken down into the 12 components detailed in the following pages.

Step 1: Forming a Task Force

The task force, with as few as 3 members or as many as 10, will be made up of the "movers and shakers" of the process for assessing economic needs.



"Successful businesses are founded on..."
—A.G. Gaston

A basic strategy should cover the who, what, where, when, and how of the economic needs assessment.

limited commitment on their part could hamper the effective process.

Step 2: Developing a Basic Strategy

A basic strategy should cover the who, what, where, when, and how of the economic needs assessment. If the information gathered is too limited, then a minimum of 10 percent of the local business community should be surveyed. The task force will also want to identify any concerns that suspect local businesses may already have. Visits with a few business leaders should provide previews of some of these concerns, and should include items such as:

- Sufficient space and security lighting in parking areas around businesses.
- Appropriate city landscaping and beautification of public areas.
- Promotion of local businesses in the greater community.

Such a list of concerns may prove very helpful during a public needs assessment.

Step 3: Planning a Public Meeting

After developing a basic list of questions for the economic needs assessment, the task force should conduct a public meeting to explain the needs assessment procedure to the community. A range of individuals should be invited to this meeting to reflect the diversity of the community and to ensure that all concerns are addressed. It will be important to emphasize at this meeting that although this assessment process may appear to be a needs assessment conducted for Operation Weed and Seed, the needs assessment will be specifically focused on the business needs of the community (residents might otherwise think that they would be evaluated, with few results to show for their input).

A typical list of participants in a public meeting might also include:

- Neighborhood association representatives.
- Representatives of neighborhood watch groups.
- Parent and youth group representatives.
- Local media representatives.
- Law enforcement representatives.
- City, county, and State officials.
- School administrators, teachers, or other individuals in the community.

It is also important to publicize the meeting through inserts in local company payroll checks, fliers distributed to various civic clubs, and newspaper advertisements.

An agenda for the public meeting might include the following items:

- A welcome and introductions of key community leaders in attendance.
- An explanation of the economic needs assessment process.
- Requests for volunteer help.
- A discussion, led by a panel of experts, about resident and business owner concerns and issues they would like to have examined.
- The recording of solutions suggested to address concerns in the business community.
- Designation of community members to be surveyed.
- Identification of any noncommunity businesses or individuals with a stake in the neighborhood's economic future and who should also be surveyed.
- General questions that residents want answered.

The main reason for holding a public meeting is to stress to the community that something is about to happen—i.e., an economic needs assessment. It is crucial that participants feel at ease and understand that the information being gathered will not be used to point blame at anyone and that their responses to questions will remain confidential. Participants should also, however, be informed that results of the assessment will be available to all interested parties—including the news media. Finally, the public meeting should encourage business owners in attendance to become more involved with the Business Alliance itself.

Step 4: Identifying Effective Techniques

Using the input provided by participants at the public meeting, the task force can begin drafting the questionnaires that will be used to gather information. If the survey is to address as many concerns and questions as possible, then the questions should be broad and open-ended. For example, instead of asking specifically about all the elements of the local economy, a single question can be asked about the local economy in general: "What is the best thing about business in our community?" or "What is the worst thing about business in our community?"

Open-ended questions elicit a variety of responses about the major economic concerns of a community. Respondents will also tend to feel better about being asked open-ended questions because such questions do not seem to

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The objective of the assessment interview is to get an accurate picture of the business community and its specific needs.

- Demographic information such as age, race, and gender, which is important in determining whether two distinct groups feel differently about the same questions, should be recorded.
- Individuals who can affect the community (i.e., nonresidents) should be excluded from the survey. As pointed out in "Step 2: Develop a Basic Strategy," surveying 10 percent of any one group is generally sufficient to achieve a representative sampling of an overall group.
- An outside consultant who is familiar with needs assessment should be used to review the assessment interview process. The objective of the assessment interview is to get an accurate picture of the business community and its specific needs; surveyors who are too close to the community may be biased. Outside help can often be obtained at minimum cost through a nearby college or university interested in gathering data.

The following are a few possible questions to be asked of local business owners:

- What type of business do you operate in (specific name of business and neighborhood)?
- How long have you had a business in this neighborhood?
- Where did you move your business from?
- How long do you plan to stay in the neighborhood?
- How do you feel about conducting business here?
- What neighborhood improvements that would help your business do better do you like to see made?
- What is the biggest business problem you face in this neighborhood?
- What percentage of your clients come from this neighborhood?
- How do you think your clients feel about your business being here?
- Do you have any other comments?

The task force may wish to design a different set of questions for business owners who own real estate in the neighborhood but who are not in the neighborhood doing business. A few questions that might be asked include the following:

- What is the address of your building?
- How long have you owned a building in (specific name of neighborhood)?
- How long do you plan to own a building there?
- How do you feel about owning a building in that neighborhood?

- How do you think your tenants feel about living/working there?
- Do you have any other comments?

Finally, it is important to survey any nonresidents who may be stakeholders in the economic future of the neighborhood. This group may include potential investors or employers as well as new graduates seeking employment in the community. A few questions that might be asked of nonresidents include the following:

*The focus group
designed to get
to open up.*

- Do you know where (specific name of the neighborhood) is located?
- Do you ever go to this neighborhood? If so, for what purpose?
- If and when you go there, do you have any concerns about being in the area? If so, why?
- What do you know about the neighborhood?
- What have you heard about the neighborhood?
- How would you describe this neighborhood to others?
- What do you think are the major challenges facing this neighborhood?
- Do you have any other comments?

Step 5: Devising a Method and a Plan

Once the task force members have determined what type of questions should be asked, they will be able to focus on the best way to ask the questions. Influencing the survey method will be how specific the questions are, how the answers must be rendered (i.e., multi- or bilingually), the importance of the respondent's profile to the assessment, how much time the respondent has to participate, and how much time the task force has to gather the data. Following are three suggested methods for gathering survey information.

Telephone Interviews

The telephone interview is useful in getting information from business owners, who can be difficult to reach. The drawback to the telephone interview is that in neighborhoods with many residents who lack telephone service, surveyors cannot obtain representative consumer samples.

Focus Groups

Marketing professionals learned long ago that no matter how well dog food is packaged, dogs will not eat it if they do not want it. The focus group is designed to get people to open up and discuss in detail what types of businesses are needed in their neighborhoods, what kinds of products they do

Once a task force decides which data-gathering method(s) to use, a plan for carrying out the needs assessment must be developed.

recording comments, and tabulating results can form an excellent addition, professional interviewers (also known as facilitators) may be required to obtain accurate results from the focus group. Experts can often be obtained at reasonable cost through the personnel department of a local corporation or manufacturing firm or the marketing school of a local college or university.

Mailed or Hand-Delivered Questionnaires

After questionnaires are mailed or hand delivered, 1 out of 3 may return the completed forms. Sending out questionnaires is a good way for reaching large numbers of people, but at least 10 percent of those returned should be verified or followed up in telephone interviews.

Solidifying the Plan

Once a task force decides which data-gathering method(s) to use, a plan for carrying out the needs assessment must be developed. The plan should include the following elements:

- The number of volunteers needed.
- All resources required (which may include money).
- The name of each task force member who will be in charge of the survey.
- Where and how the surveys are to be conducted.
- The estimated time needed for completing the survey.
- Flow charts and planning grids that illustrate the plan.

Examples of the information that might be found on a cover sheet designed to assess the in-person method of gathering data are shown in the following:

- Information will be collected through in-person interviews.
- The target population for the survey is all businesses in (specific name) neighborhood.
- Surveys will be conducted in door-to-door canvassing in (specific name) neighborhood.
- The resources needed to begin this survey are questionnaires, writing supplies, answer sheets, and clipboards.
- The basic method to be used for this survey involves persons who will approach owners or managers (at their business) to see whether they have a few minutes to answer some questions.

Finally, it is imperative that the task force present the plan to the steering group or board of the Business Alliance for final approval. Once the plan has final approval, the task force can hold the first public meeting and explain the plan for the economic needs assessment. It is important to keep a board of directors or steering group informed because the task force will need their help to complete the assessment.

Step 6: Recruiting and Training Volunteers

Once the task force plan has been drafted and the assessment method approved, a volunteer coordinator should be appointed to recruit and train volunteers and to manage execution of the plan. Perhaps the best way to recruit volunteers for an assessment is by making presentations to the groups that hold regular meetings in the neighborhood. Volunteers may also be recruited at universities, community colleges, or even high schools, which often require students to perform community service. One note of caution: Students may require more supervision than do adult volunteers.

The training of volunteers can generally be accomplished in one short session. It is important that the Business Alliance board of directors also supports and attends the training session. Basically, the training will explain the questionnaire, the method that will be used to complete the questionnaire, and how to record answers. Volunteers should be given ideas about how to prompt people to complete the questionnaires without influencing their answers. Some guidelines include the following:

- To be friendly and courteous when asking questions.
- To ask the questions as they are written on the form.
- To ask the questions plainly, without suggesting or hinting at a particular response.
- To ask for elaboration if a respondent's answer is vague or incomplete.
- To be ready to explain the purpose behind the economic needs assessment and how the information that a respondent gives will be used.
- To tell people that their responses will be anonymous, so they need not give their names.
- To tell respondents who want a copy of the survey or additional information how to reach the task force member in charge of the assessment.
- To always thank everyone contacted, regardless of whether they chose to participate.

The volunteer coordinator should monitor the success of the volunteers in reaching the goals of the assessment plan and remind them of their dead-

A volunteer coordinator should be appointed to recruit and train volunteers.

Finally, it is important that volunteers be recognized for their efforts. This can be done by providing them with T-shirts, mugs, tote bags, special parties or dinners, or simply a letter of appreciation. For many volunteers, the survey may be their first experience with volunteer work in the community, and official recognition will encourage them to stay involved with the Business Alliance.

An elaborate budget is generally not necessary for an economic needs assessment.

Step 7: Setting a Budget

An elaborate budget is generally not necessary for an economic needs assessment. Some tasks, however, will cost money—postage and mail, photocopying, word processing, or computer work for tabulating results. Awards or appreciation dinners for volunteers are other expenses to be considered.

Step 8: Identifying Statistical Data

Although most of the information in the assessment will come from questionnaires or focus groups, other information should also be gathered. Universities, State agencies, and community organizations regularly collect a variety of useful statistical data that can be used to verify or disprove the validity of a survey. Sources for this information may include the following:

- Police reports and crime statistics that denote businesses victimized at a higher than normal burglary rate.
- Information available locally through published reports, such as employment rates, business closings or relocations from the area over the last 5–7 years, and comparison of insurance rates for neighborhoods with those for businesses in the city overall.
- Newspaper articles that can provide a historical perspective on economic development initiatives undertaken in the community.

Step 9: Conducting the Assessment

At this crucial point of the assessment, it is important that task force members remember that working with volunteers is not like working with employees. Volunteers are usually committed to a project because they find meaning or fulfillment in it; if they fail to enjoy the experience, they will abandon the project.

Once the information gathering is under way, the process should be closely monitored to ensure data accuracy and consistency. It is also crucial that the method and plan be as flexible as possible in order to deal with unexpected problems. Here again, it is important that the volunteer coordinator maintain open communication with group leaders.

Step 10: Tabulating and Analyzing Results

Data from a survey can be tabulated in two ways: manually or electronically. When data are tabulated manually, a highly organized system should be used for the recording of the data. Some suggested steps include:

- Using a grid system to tally the answers on the questionnaire with slash marks (////).
- Setting aside a response when it does not fit a category on the grid, at least until whoever is tabulating the data has gone through all the responses. Once a review has been completed, the tabulator will likely be able to accurately calculate the odd response.

When data are tabulated electronically, and should the task force choose to use outside computer assistance, whoever runs the software program must have the same understanding of the assessment and survey as those who conducted it.

Data should be converted from raw numbers to percentages for better understanding; the task force can then begin to interpret the information in a draft report to the Business Alliance board of directors.

Step 11: Issuing Results

Once the board of directors has approved the initial draft report on the assessment, a final public meeting should be held, to be set up like the first public meeting described in step 3, above. At this meeting, the task force should present the results of the assessment and make copies of the report available to everyone in attendance. Most important, this meeting should be used to recognize the volunteers for their contributions to the Business Alliance.

Once the report has been presented, an appointed program leader should lead a brainstorming session on how to address the concerns that were raised by the assessment. This session should be conducted in a participatory manner much like the public meeting described above in step 3. Once again, the information and comments offered during this session should be further examined so that the Business Alliance can put together an all-inclusive plan for improving the local business community.

Step 12: Developing Plans

Some of the concerns identified by the assessment may be matters that the community is already struggling to resolve. For example, if area merchants are concerned about street crime, the Alliance board of directors may inform the city council that the city needs to put more resources into preventing street crime. Should the assessment reveal that the city already has a crime

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its assessment, can counter with the following statement: 80 percent of the people who shop in our neighborhood watch program is not the most effective way to deal with particular problem. They suggest that more overhead light the retail areas and that uniformed security guards be posted in risk areas."

Having assessment data will not get a business community what it wants; however, a plan for dealing with the problems of the community, backed up by comprehensive data, is much more difficult to dismiss than a vague and unsupported plea for help.

Building Economic Consensus

Chapter 1 of this Guide presented a basic design for establishing a structured business organization. In chapter 2, an outline was provided to help assess the economic needs of the local community. This chapter will focus on the process by which an organized Business Alliance uses the results of its economic needs assessment to negotiate with other groups to reach Alliance goals. This process is known as building economic consensus.

Four Models for Consensus Building

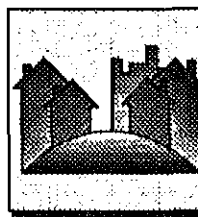
It is important that a Business Alliance be flexible when organizing economic consensus programs that will vary from project to project. William Potapchuk of the Program for Community Problem-Solving found that four basic models for structuring a consensus-building process emerged from his study of hundreds of successful programs.

Committees and Task Groups

Committees can most often be used by organizations having 10–60 members who represent different interest groups. The committee establishes task groups to gather information on specific issues (such as those needed for the economic needs assessment, described in chapter 2), to identify related concerns, or to develop alternative strategies to solve a problem.

Negotiating Teams

Representatives from the Business Alliance who have expertise in a certain area can be organized into teams. Each team determines its goals and interests, functioning as a unit during problem-solving sessions. Teams work best when they have between three and five members. Team members must have time between sessions to talk among themselves about how to proceed and time to go back to their respective constituents to discuss the progress of the discussion, seeking input from those not present.



*"Let the unity of
community remain
intact."*

*—The Rev. Jesse
Jackson, 1989*

economic needs assessment public meeting should be remembered. A conference is not, however, an appropriate format in which to build consensus. Generally, conferences identify issues that become the basis for ongoing working groups.

A task group can identify issues by actively seeking public input.

Task Group and Public Input

A task group with 8–15 people can identify issues and alternatives, evaluate alternatives, and make choices. It does so by actively seeking input from interested persons and groups at every step of the process. A task group is often used in addressing highly technical issues or complex issues. Drafting tasks that require a small group with consistent members is a good use of a task group.

Once the Business Alliance board of directors has decided what structure can best help them deal with a specific economic problem, it is important for them to be able to explain the process in some way to the public at large.

The following three-step process can be extremely helpful in developing a well thought-out explanation.

Step 1: Identifying players and their roles. If it is premature to select participants in the economic consensus building, categories of participants must be declared because they help define political dynamics. It is important to note who will be selecting participants. Furthermore, it is important to convey what participants will be asked to do (which includes questions of role scope and depth). The decisionmaking process should move forth: If the board of directors expects a consensus, it must be clear that the same is true of group authority. Failure to clarify the level of authority for decisionmaking can doom a group if conflicts arise.

The nature of the final product (e.g., a contract, development agreement, ordinance, vision, or strategic plan) should be announced, as should the nature of the policy process being served (e.g., framing the problem, identifying options, developing solutions, or implementing agreements). If the final product is to be delivered to the city council or city board, representatives of those bodies should be so informed; if possible, they should join the Business Alliance board in its announcement.

Realistic, flexible, and relatively generous timelines, milestones, and goals will help explain the process of economic consensus building.

The costs of consensus building—staff time, consulting fees for technical studies—should be itemized. In addition, the rules in writing provides symbolic evidence of the type of process being used (see appendix B for more on bylaws) and important guidance for problemsolvers.

economic problems assigned to them by providing the following important information:

- Names of parties involved in consensus building; whether representation is clear (and if not, how representation will be determined); whether the group needs an additional team to represent interests of the Business Alliance; whether the team has a joint view of interests and strategies; whether any party must communicate or negotiate with constituents or others not present (and if so, who the parties are); whether the group needs the help of a third party; and what the group will be working on.
- What combined issues, if any, are on the table; whether the other parties have been contacted about their concerns and issues (and if not, when they will be contacted); whether there is agreement on logistics for the meeting (including meeting location, meeting time, and identity of the recordkeeper); whether meetings will be private or public (and if public, whether required notices have been posted); and who is paying expenses such as rental or meeting space, food and beverages, and lodging for invited guests.

Step 3: Creating a game plan. Creating a game plan involves preparation of an agenda, delineation of the decisionmaking process, and description of a negotiating strategy. In the preparation of an agenda, consideration should be given to explaining the following points:

- Whether a premeeting consultation is required.
- Who proposes the ground rules.
- How ground rules are adopted.

The delineation of the group decisionmaking process will make use of the following information:

- Possibility that the group needs a complete consensus.
- Possibility that specific data are needed (and if so, who will gather the data and whether the data will be acceptable to all parties).
- Possible discussion between the group and the Business Alliance board of directors about the data before negotiations begin.
- Possible requirement for the group to allow time for data collection during the negotiation process.
- Whether all parties will agree.

Explanation of the group's negotiating strategy—a complex process—will include details on many of the following topics:

- Whether all alternatives to negotiation are known

- Whether the other parties share this economic problem.
- Possibility that these other groups will bring other issues to the table.
- Whether the working group has thought through all the implications of a Business Alliance.
- Identification of the bottom line.
- How the working group will assess potential solutions.
- Whether the group can make its criteria explicit.
- What bargaining power the Business Alliance brings to the table; how it may be used; and whether the other parties will see this as helpful or coercive.
- Whether the working group can also answer these questions for the other parties connected to the economic problem (and if it can, the development of a Business Alliance strategy will be enhanced).
- How options will be generated.
- Whether the parties have jointly created options to solve the problem (if so, whether analysis of the options is needed).
- What criteria will be used to evaluate options.
- Whether every possible creative solution has been generated (if not, the reason for it); whether the Business Alliance can assist in the process.
- How the agreement will be reached.
- Whether the Business Alliance needs a written agreement.
- Possible need for an attorney to check the draft agreement.
- Possibility of linking the agreement to a formal decision-making process; whether those responsible for that process are involved in the process; and how they will be kept informed.
- Possible requirement for feedback from the public on a draft agreement; who will handle the feedback process; and the need to reach the public before a decision is reached.
- How the agreement will be implemented.
- Identification of the party responsible for implementation of the agreement.
- Definition of the timeline.
- Whether the agreement needs to be monitored.
- Possibility of regular meetings with all parties to ensure implementation.

Executing the Action Plan

In conjunction with Operation Weed and Seed, the Business Alliance program is designed to help communities achieve long-term stability through economic revitalization. The most challenging and difficult part of neighborhood revitalization is implementing an action plan to deal with the problems and concerns identified by neighborhood businesses and residents.

Although there is no specific formula, one ingredient is essential for the success of a Business Alliance: Businesses and residents must actively participate in developing the plan. The people who work and live in a community targeted for revitalization must decide what they hope to accomplish and how they will achieve their goals.

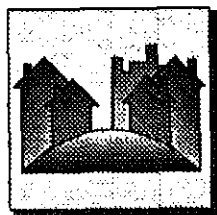
Goals and Objectives

Setting goals and objectives is necessary to focus Business Alliance members on their revitalization efforts and action plan.

- Goals are broad statements that guide a Business Alliance and are not "cast in stone." Goals must be reevaluated regularly by an Alliance board of directors (usually occurring at 6-month intervals) and changed when-ever necessary.
- Objectives are the intended outcomes of a program; they should be specific and measurable.

Any well-organized action plan should deal with unsolved problems, which is why the economic needs of a community must be determined before any goals are set.

The goal of the Fort Myers, Florida, Business Alliance, for example, was to develop wide-reaching corporate support to strengthen the area's Weed and Seed initiative. That goal included the delivery of economic development services, the establishment of long-range economic recovery programs, and the building of solid economic futures within a specific neighborhood.



"Persistence and a positive attitude are necessary ingredients for any successful venture."

—Former Virginia L. Douglas Wilder, 1986

By establishing a Business Alliance, a community shows that it is serious about working on neighborhood revitalization.

- To implement a field test for an economic tracking system
- To implement the full economic tracking system by September 1991

The Fort Myers Business Alliance decided to establish the tracking system to identify which businesses were needed in the area, which businesses closed, what market needs the area had, and which businesses had operated in the area. The tracking system is part of a larger program that includes employment and job training programs to address the needs of a predominantly low-income community.

The Business Alliance noted in its program profile that "To attract businesses into targeted neighborhoods that have been neglected and isolated from the community as a whole."

Developing the Plan

The Operation Weed and Seed Implementation Guide recommends the following steps to manage a neighborhood restoration plan. The steps listed below, are easily adapted to an action plan developed by a community to implement and monitor economic revitalization efforts.

- The needs assessment survey and current comprehensive plan for the targeted neighborhood should be reviewed.
- An action plan should be drafted.
- The plan should be converted to goals, objectives, and action items.
- Monthly meetings of Business Alliance members should be held to review the action plan.
- Tasks should be revised as needed while the action plan is being implemented.
- The Business Alliance should meet regularly with residents and other interested parties, perhaps every 3 or 6 months, to review progress and solicit suggestions, advice, and participation.

Public Relations: Spreading the Word

By establishing a Business Alliance, a community shows that it is serious about working on neighborhood revitalization. A successful community should aggressively and widely promote its activities, keeping the public informed about its progress.

Along these lines, a Business Alliance should develop a public relations campaign to help foster the perception of a successful program. The most significant elements of a neighborhood restoration

promote the Business Alliance program; however, it need not be time consuming or costly.

Many opportunities to promote the Business Alliance exist at the neighborhood or community level. As a starting point, local news media outlets can be identified, and a master list of daily, weekly, and biweekly newspapers; trade publications (such as a builders' association newsletter); television stations; and radio stations can be compiled. Ideally, the list would include the name of each media outlet; its address, telephone number, and fax number; and, whenever possible, the name of a contact person.

Many daily newspapers have editors who oversee the community business news pages, which is a natural place for notices about Business Alliance meetings and other events. A business editor could become a regular contact for news releases about meetings, programs, or other activities.

Local television news shows usually welcome story ideas about local communities. Any event with strong visual elements, such as a neighborhood cleanup day or small-business fair, usually appeals to a television news director or reporter. Many television stations also offer community programming through which a Business Alliance could publicize its efforts. Community programming usually consists of a talk-show format, a community calendar listing, or both.

Many television stations and local cable companies accept 30-second public service announcements (PSA's) from nonprofit organizations. At several thousand dollars, the cost of a PSA may seem prohibitive; however, a local video production company or independent producer—one who operates or lives in a community targeted for revitalization—may be willing to reduce the price of or charge nothing for a nonprofit PSA. Students at a community college or high school may also produce a PSA at no charge.

As shown by the extensive coverage of Operation Weed and Seed in many cities, local and national media will give air time to stories of local people banding together to improve their living conditions.

When the Cocoa Beach (Florida) Area Chamber of Commerce formed its Business Alliance program, the local newspaper carried reports and an editorial lauding the idea. This publicity helped attract dozens of members and prompted the Chamber to adopt a communitywide Business Alliance because businesses across the area obviously shared the concerns of businesses in the original targeted neighborhood.

The media is a powerful tool for promoting the activities and achievements of a Business Alliance program, playing a key role in creating an environment conducive to success.

The media is a powerful tool for promoting the activities and achievements of a Business Alliance program.

Considering a World of Ideas

A Business Alliance program can employ an array of tactics to stimulate economic revitalization in targeted neighborhoods, helping businesses grow and prosper. Such tactics range from conducting small-business seminars and mentoring programs to establishing small-business loan programs and business incubators for entrepreneurs.

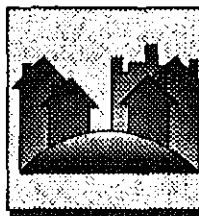
Mentoring Programs

A mentoring program is an effective way for business owners in targeted neighborhoods to develop close working relationships with locally established companies and entrepreneurs. Mentoring programs that target small businesses and high-school students are an excellent means for businesses to help fledgling entrepreneurs build their own businesses and, in turn, help revitalize neighborhoods.

A successful mentoring program needs strong support and commitment from all participants; a sound organization; careful selection, training, monitoring, and evaluation of mentors; good communication; and input from and involvement of all partners. (For information on a proven model program, contact the Florida Chamber of Commerce for a copy of its *StarMaker Mentoring Program Planning Manual*; for the names of other resources, see appendix A.)

The Business Alliance program of the Winter Park (Florida) Chamber of Commerce implemented an Adopt-A-Business program to establish relationships between minority-owned businesses and corporate sponsors or successful entrepreneurs. (See appendixes C and D for details on Adopt-A-Business.) The Chamber served as the catalyst for the program and adviser to the partnerships.

In developing its mentoring program, Winter Park outlined specific responsibilities that each member of a partnership must agree to follow. The owner of a minority business developed a business plan and set minimum requirements



*"Success in life
revolves around
recognizing and
using our abilities
our 'raw materials'."*

*—Benjamin Franklin
1990*

Small business is the fastest growing part of the U.S. economy.

The sponsor assists the owner of a minority business in developing a comprehensive action plan and solving problems, encourages business opportunities between sponsors and minority enterprises, and reports any concerns to the adviser. The adviser recommends action to the adviser.

The adviser serves as support base for both partners, assists in educating the corporate sponsor in the positive impact the program makes in the neighborhood or community, ensures that the owner of a minority business follows through on recommendations made by the adopting company, encourages regular meetings between a business owner and the adopting company, reports to the Business Alliance on the progress of the partnership, and conducts periodic and final evaluations of the partnership.

Small-Business Incubators

Small business is the fastest growing part of the U.S. economy. In 1997, 99 percent of all businesses employ fewer than 100 workers, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. Small businesses, however, also have an alarming failure rate: Within 5 years, 62 percent go out of business.

Small-business incubators are designed to help young entrepreneurs avoid the pitfalls of starting a business. Two of the Florida Business Alliance are developing plans for incubators in targeted neighborhoods as part of their economic revitalization efforts. Incubators provide small businesses with affordable office and manufacturing space; shared support services; access to financing, marketing, management, and other business development services. Small-business incubators are designed to help new businesses survive and grow when they are most vulnerable.

According to the National Business Incubation Association, more than 500 small-business incubators are operating in North America. The impacts of an incubator, as set forth by the association, include the following:

- Creation of jobs.
- Innovation in, development of, and transfer of technology.
- Diversification of local economies.
- Expansion of the tax base.
- Creation of investment opportunities.
- Creation of a market for products and professional services.

Almost 40 percent of the Nation's small-business incubators are private nonprofit organizations created for economic development purposes, according to the association. Public-private incubators that offer access to investment funding and resources and to private-sector financing and business expertise make up 30 percent of the incubators. The remaining 30 percent are

Business Alliances in Winter Park and Manatee County, Florida, are developing incubators using public and private resources. The incubators will serve small businesses in their startup phases and provide a network and outreach system for minority businesses and low-income residents.

State Enterprise Zones

To improve economic and social conditions in blighted neighborhoods, approximately 35 States have adopted enterprise zone legislation that offers incentives to businesses to locate in these areas and hire local residents. Enterprise zones offer tax benefits and regulatory relief to businesses, although specific incentives vary regionally.

In Florida, the first State to adopt enterprise zone legislation, the incentives include the following:

- Corporate income tax and sales tax credits for all companies that hire residents of enterprise zones.
- Property tax credits for businesses that relocate to or expand in an enterprise zone.
- Refunds of sales tax on building materials and property purchases for businesses that operate within an enterprise zone.
- Sales tax exemptions for electrical energy used by businesses in an enterprise zone.

Local governments can offer additional incentives within enterprise zones, including property and utility tax abatements, occupational license tax exemptions, and industrial revenue bonds.

Federal Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

The primary goal of one notable initiative is to encourage cooperation among Federal, State, and local Governments. The Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC) program allows the Federal Government to proffer an arrangement whereby State and local governments create and propel formerly comprehensive strategic plans, with the Federal Government waiving regulations, when possible, that could interfere with those plans. Specific benefits available for federally designated empowerment zones include the following:

- Eligibility for new tax-exempt facility bonds.
- Special consideration in competition for funding under other Federal programs.
- Special help in overcoming regulatory impediments to implementing

*Approximately
35 States have
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to businesses.*

The lack of capital financing is one of the biggest problems faced by many small and minority businesses.

- Employer wage credit for zone residents extended to qualified businesses engaging in business in a zone.
- Increased Section 179 deductions for qualified properties.

The benefits available for federally designated enterprise communities include the following:

- Eligibility for new tax-exempt facility bonds.
- Special consideration in competition for funding under other federal programs.
- Special help in overcoming regulatory impediments to implementing strategic plans.
- Receipt of approximately \$3 million in EZ/EC social service funds.

To be considered for EZ/EC designation, an area must be nominated by the State and local governments or by a State-chartered economic development corporation.

Loans for Small Businesses and Minority Businesses

The lack of capital financing is one of the biggest problems facing small and minority businesses. Federal agencies offer a variety of financing programs, including the following:

- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Microloans for young entrepreneurs in inner-city neighborhoods and rural areas to develop home-based, businesses.
- Direct loans and counseling services from the SBA for small businesses owned by low-income persons or located in areas with widespread unemployment or predominantly low-income residents.
- SBA loans to small general contractors to help with short-term residential or commercial construction or rehabilitation of properties.
- Fixed-asset loan programs administered by SBA-licensed community development companies to allow new or expanding small businesses to promote economic development in specific areas.
- U.S. Department of Commerce Business Development Assistance program guarantees up to 80 percent of the unpaid balances of loans from private lenders to sustain businesses in designated areas, and to create or retain jobs.
- U.S. Department of Commerce grants for establishment of

Public-Private Partnerships

The 1992 riots in Los Angeles spawned unique partnerships between the public and private sectors that can serve as models for other depressed inner-city communities.

Business Development and Entrepreneur Center

A year after the eruption of civil unrest in Los Angeles, the Business Development and Entrepreneur Center was established as a partnership between the Los Angeles Urban League and private industry. The Center, designed to provide assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs in virtually every phase of business, was funded by \$1 million from Arco and equipped with computers donated by IBM and valued at \$80,000.

The Business Development and Entrepreneur Center provides workshops, seminars, and one-on-one counseling and helps businesses gain access to capital for expansion. Through the Center, small businesses become more aware of opportunities to compete for government contracts through a computer linking the Center with local government purchasing departments.

Financial Employment Center

In another unprecedented partnership, a consortium of 17 financial institutions contributed \$1 million to establish a center to train inner-city youth and guarantee them jobs at savings banks.

"We have to create sustained economic growth in America," U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown said at the unveiling of the Financial Employment Center in May 1993. "It's the private sector that fuels the engine that pulls the train of economic growth."

Considering Profiles of Success

Operation Weed and Seed has helped local communities "weed out" many drug traffickers, violent offenders, and other criminals from inner-city neighborhoods; the "seed" of long-term economic revitalization can then be planted to create an environment in which people not only want to live but also want to work and conduct business.

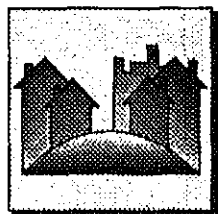
As part of the Weed and Seed program, the Business Alliance is designed to give communities the tools to lay the foundation for reviving their neighborhoods. A Business Alliance program can bring together residents, business owners, government officials, law enforcement, and others to harness resources at the local, State, and Federal levels.

Five Florida Chambers of Commerce employed the Business Alliance approach to deal with problems found in every urban neighborhood or community: alienation from the mainstream business community, high crime and unemployment, drug problems, declining or stagnating business districts, unsightly or abandoned buildings and surroundings, and lack of any organization or structure to stimulate economic renewal.

Although the problems are usually the same in each community, the strategies for dealing with the problems are as varied as the imaginations and initiative of the people trying to solve them. Some of the strategies used by five Florida Chambers of Commerce are described in the following pages.

Winter Park Chamber of Commerce

Even before the Winter Park (Florida) Chamber of Commerce started its Business Alliance program in late 1992, it was developing ambitious plans to assist minority businesses. The Business Alliance program, however, allowed the Chamber to focus its efforts and serve as a model for other communities. According to Don Dalton, Chamber executive vice president, "It enabled us to be able to afford to do these programs. It gave us the focus for what we



"Much of the satisfaction in the work of life begins with an experiment; no experiment is ever quite a failure."
—Alice Walker, novelist, 1985

approximately 3,000 people. Among other things, the survey showed that residents considered jobs their number one need.

*Elements of Winter
Park's strategy include
a mentoring pro-
gram and a minority-
business access plan.*

As a result, the Chamber, the Winter Park Housing Authority, the city of Winter Park, a local minority-owned bank, a minority-owned consulting firm and a minority-business loan program developed a small-business incubator through which entrepreneurs can find low-cost office space, reduced overhead costs, and business counseling services.

Other elements of Winter Park's strategy include a mentoring program, which matches Chamber members with local business owners, and a minority-business access plan that helps defray the cost of Chamber memberships for small businesses. The Business Alliance has also sponsored a variety of small-business seminars on conducting business with government agencies and corporations.

The mentoring program, or Adopt-A-Business program, has linked owners of more than 20 minority businesses with representatives of established companies who provide counsel on business and other problems.

"They have done all kinds of helpful things to help our business," Ernestine Mosley, founder of Iii-Tech Tutoring Center Inc., says of officials at Florida Power Corporation, who serve as her mentors. "When I need to open a door, I have someone to help me."

Florida Power officials have introduced Mosley, whose nonprofit business provides after-school tutoring to 125 economically disadvantaged students, to corporate executives and other local business owners who have helped underwrite student tuition and other expenses. (For more details on the history and operation of Adopt-A-Business, see appendix C.)

The plan to help minority businesses gain access to Chamber of Commerce activities is titled the Minority Business Access Partnership Program, or MABAPP. Banks sponsor minority businesses for Chamber membership by paying 50 percent of their dues. More than 20 minority businesses have already joined the Chamber through MABAPP.

"This initiative is a self-help program that recognizes that while many minority-owned businesses are the ones who stand to gain most significantly from Chamber membership, they are also often those who can least afford the cost of joining," says Carolyn Winston, coordinator for the Chamber of Commerce Business Alliance program.

According to Chamber Executive Vice President Dalton, the Business Alliance has tapped into the hidden but heavy demand from minority business owners who want to help improve the economic climates of their neighborhoods but do not know where to turn. Membership in the Chamber Minority Business

Cocoa Beach Chamber of Commerce

The intersection of State Road 520 and U.S. Route 1 in Cocoa Beach is a busy thoroughfare that serves as a gateway to this beachfront community on Florida's east coast. The neighborhood around the highway, however, has one of the area's highest crime rates and nearly 23-percent unemployment.

Local police and community groups had worked together to reduce crime plaguing parts of the community, but nothing had been done to improve the business district. A needs assessment conducted for the Business Alliance showed that local business owners wanted to improve the district's appearance, increase law enforcement presence, and foster economic development.

One problem that the Business Alliance resolved quickly was the lack of communication between the local police and business owners. The police increased patrols and made several burglary arrests, including one that ended a streak of break-ins at a small restaurant that was about to shut down because it had lost \$7,000. Business Alliance members also support the police department's first request in 10 years to hire additional officers.

Working together to improve the district's appearance, business owners persuaded the State to spend \$70,000 to landscape medians along a 3-mile stretch of roadway.

The Business Alliance has helped business owners pull together to try to reverse a deteriorating business environment. Of about 300 businesses in the district, almost 100 have joined the program.

The Business Alliance has helped business owners pull together to try to reverse a deteriorating business environment.

Manatee Chamber of Commerce

The Business Alliance program started in Manatee County has taken a three-pronged approach to addressing economic renewal in three neighborhoods plagued by drug trafficking, burglaries, and other crimes.

Under the sponsorship of the Manatee Chamber of Commerce, the Business Alliance has established a mentoring program for up to 30 minority business owners and has provided reduced-cost membership dues for minority-owned businesses; 22 businesses have now joined the Chamber, and many more are involved in the mentoring program. A full-time prevention specialist serves as the liaison between the target communities and the minority access program and facilitates the business group's development.

Fort Myers Police Department

In a strategy different from those of the other Business Alliance sites in Florida, the Fort Myers Police Department works on economic revitalization efforts in the downtown area.

The Business Alliance is establishing an economic tracking system designed to determine what type of businesses the area needs and why other businesses have closed or relocated.

A new Community Enrichment Center developed by the city of Fort Lauderdale, the local police, and the public school district includes employment training activities for teenagers considered at risk for drug or other criminal activity.

Greater Clearwater Chamber of Commerce

The Business Alliance program is targeted at two Clearwater communities: a low-income, predominantly African-American neighborhood with high unemployment and crime, and a neighborhood in a declining downtown area.

The Clearwater Business Alliance program has sponsored a community cleanup day and conducted a series of seminars to provide business training for owners of small and minority businesses.

Conclusion

Activities like those of the five Florida Chambers of Commerce underscore the tremendous benefits that can result from pooling a community's resources in a Business Alliance program. The renewed economic vitality, improved physical conditions, enhanced self-esteem and productivity of the residents already helped, and general sense of having new life breathed into the neighborhood combine in a powerful model for other communities whose residents—perhaps despairing of finding their own solutions or frightened (or angry at) having been "forgotten"—might soon be spurred to action.

Resources and Contacts

Representatives of communities interested in forming their own Business Alliance programs are encouraged to contact any of the organizations listed below for updates and further information.

Florida Organizations

Florida Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 11309
6 South Bronough St.
Tallahassee, FL 32302-3309
904-425-1200

ocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce

10 Fortenberry Rd.
Clermont Island, FL 32952
352-459-2232

reater Clearwater Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 2457
Clearwater, FL 34617
813-461-0011

reater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 9289
610 Edwards Dr.
Fort Myers, FL 33902
813-332-3624

anatee Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 321
22 10th St. West
Bradenton, FL 32306
813-748-4311

National Organizations

U.S. Small Business Administration

Washington, DC
800-368-5855 or local SBA office

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Washington, DC
202-758-1577

U.S. Department of Labor

Washington, DC
202-535-0580

National Business Incubation Association

Athens, OH
614-593-4331

Bureau of Justice Assistance

Response Center
633 Indiana Ave. NW.
Washington, DC
800-421-6770

Bureau of Justice Assistance Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD
Washington, DC
800-688-4252

Federal Programs

Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

Office of Community Planning and Development
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
For technical assistance call 800-998-9999

Job Training Partnership Act

U.S. Department of Labor
Contact State department of labor or 202-535-0580 for regional employment and training office

Employment Services and Job Training Demonstration Programs

U.S. Department of Labor
202-535-0677

Minority Business Development Centers

U.S. Department of Commerce
202-377-8015

Economic Development Technical Assistance

U.S. Department of Commerce
202-377-2127

Management and Technical Assistance for Economically Disadvantaged Businesses

U.S. Small Business Administration
202-205-6423 or local SBA office

Related Federal Loan and Grant Programs for Small and Minority-Owned Businesses

Business Development Assistance
U.S. Department of Commerce
contact 202-377-4731.

Grants for Public Works and

Research and Evaluation Pro

U.S. Department of Commerce
202-377-4085

Community Development Block Grants

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Contact local community development office or 202-708-1577 for local office

Loans for Small Businesses—Loans

U.S. Small Business Administration
Contact local SBA office

Minority Business Development Section 8(a)

U.S. Small Business Administration
Contact local SBA office

Local Development Company (502)

U.S. Small Business Administration
Call 202-205-6485 for local SBA office

Additional Reading Resources

Starting and Managing a Small Business On Your Own, Wendell U.S. Small Business Administration of Business Development, 198 at no cost from local SBA office business development centers.

Economic Development Management, Kenneth C. Wagner, 1978. University of Mississippi Press, 3825 Ridgewood Jackson, MS 39211 (\$9.95).

Community Development as a Process, Lee J. Carey, editor, University of Missouri Press, 2141 E. Main Blvd., Columbia, MO 65201 (\$

Franchising Manual

Franchising Manual, Florida Chamber of Commerce and Florida Education and Industry Coalition, September 1991. Florida Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 11309, Tallahassee, FL 32302-3309; 904-222-2831; available at no cost.

1993 Florida New Business Guide & Checklist

1993 Florida New Business Guide & Checklist, Florida Department of Commerce, Division of Economic Development, 107 West Gaines St., Tallahassee, FL 32302-2000; 904-488-9357; available at no cost.

Economic Development Services, 1991

Economic Development Services, 1991, Florida Department of Commerce, Division of Economic Development, 107 West Gaines St., Tallahassee, FL 32302-2000; 904-222-2831; available at no cost.

Drug-Free Work Place, 1990, Florida Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 11309, Tallahassee, FL 32302-3309; 904-222-2831 (904-222-2831).

Implementation Tools for Comprehensive Planning

Implementation Tools for Comprehensive Planning, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 1993. Office of Coordinated Planning, 1200 Equitable Bldg., 100 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30303 (\$3).

Sample Bylaws for Business Alliances

ing guidelines should provide accurate and authoritative information to include in the bylaws for a Business Alliance program. Information is provided with the understanding that the Bureau of Justice is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a professional should be sought.

Introduction

ing sample bylaws should help guide Business Alliances that are preparing bylaws for the first time or revising existing bylaws. Culled from a range of formats currently used by business associations, the bylaws include provisions that are essential for workable bylaws.

ing and format are suggestions that Business Alliances can include, or adapt to their individual needs. Blanks in the text allow organizations to insert their own information, most of which relates to dates for the election and orientation of officers and directors. Because the timing of these elections is vitally important to the success of an Alliance, a sample timeline has been included at the end of this appendix.

I: General

_____ (Name)

Organization is incorporated under the laws of the State of _____ and shall be known as the _____ Alliance, Incorporated.

Purpose (Include enough detail and specifics to reflect the purpose of the organization.)

Business Alliance is organized to achieve the

nity and representing them in city, county, State and national legislative and political affairs; preventing or addressing controversies, which may arise, that are detrimental to expansion and growth of business in the community; and creating a greater appreciation of the value of liberal investment of substance and self on behalf of the interests of competitive business.

- Promoting business and community growth and development by implementing economic programs designed to strengthen and expand the potential of all business within the trade area; promoting civic, cultural programs that are designed to increase the functional values of the community; and discovering and correcting abuses that prevent the promotion of business expansion and community growth.

or

The _____ Business Alliance is organized to advance the welfare and prosperity of the _____ Neighborhood so that all citizens and all areas of its business community shall prosper. Necessary means of promotion shall be provided and particular attention and emphasis shall be given to the economic, civic, commercial, cultural, industrial, and educational interests of the area.

Section 3: Area (Identify the area served.)

The _____ Area or _____ economic region shall be organized to include the neighborhoods of: _____, _____, and _____, in the county of _____.

Section 4: Limitation of Methods

The _____ Business Alliance shall observe all local, State, and Federal laws that apply to a nonprofit organization as defined in Section 501(c)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Article II: Membership

Section 1: Eligibility

Any person, association, corporation, partnership, or estate having an interest in the objectives of the organization shall be eligible to apply for membership.

Section 2: Election (how application is made, received, and approved)

Applications for membership shall be submitted in writing on forms provided for that purpose and shall be signed by the applicant. Election of members shall be by the board of directors at any meeting thereof. Any applicant elected shall become a member upon payment of the regularly scheduled dues.

Section 3: Investments

Membership investments shall be payable in advance at such rate or rates, schedule, or formula as may be, from time to time, prescribed by the board of directors.

Section 4: Termination (resignation, expulsion, and delinquency)

Any member may resign from the Business Alliance upon written request to the board of directors.

Any member shall be expelled by the board of directors by a two-thirds vote for nonpayment of dues after 90 days from the due date, unless otherwise extended for good cause.

Any member may be expelled by a two-thirds vote of the board of directors, at a regularly scheduled meeting thereof, for conduct unbecoming a member or prejudicial to the aims or repute of the Business Alliance, after notice and opportunity for a hearing are afforded the member complained against.

Section 5: Voting

In any proceeding in which voting by members is called for, each member in good standing shall be entitled to cast one vote.

or

In any proceeding in which voting by members is called for, each member shall be entitled to 1 vote; and each member firm, association, or corporation shall be entitled to a number of votes determined by the amount of investment paid, not to exceed 10 votes.

Section 6: Exercise of Privileges (assignment of membership within subscription and any limitations)

Any firm, association, corporation, partnership, or estate holding membership may nominate individuals whom the holder desires to exercise the privileges of membership covered by its subscriptions and shall have the right to change its membership nomination upon written notice.

Section 7: Orientation (Areas of complete orientation should be indicated; detailed outlines of each group should be part of the Business Alliance procedures manual.)

At regular intervals, orientation on the purposes and activities of this organization shall be conducted for the following groups: new directors, officers and directors, committee heads, committees, and new members. A detailed outline for the orientation of each of these groups shall be a part of this

Except for the right to vote, honorary members shall have all the powers of members and shall be exempt from payment of dues. The board of directors shall confer or revoke honorary membership by a majority vote.

Article III: Meetings

Section 1: Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the corporation, in compliance with State law, shall be held during (month) of each year. The time and place shall be fixed by the board of directors and notice thereof mailed to each member at least (number) days before said meeting.

Section 2: Additional Meetings (general membership, board, and committee meetings)

General meetings of the Business Alliance may be called by the chairperson of the board at any time, or upon petition in writing of any (number) percent of) members in good standing: Notice of special meetings shall be mailed to each member at least 5 days before such meetings, board meetings may be called by the chairperson of the board or by the board of directors upon written application of three members of the board (notice, in writing, of the purpose of the meeting, shall be given to each director at least 1 day before said meeting), and committee meetings may be called at any time by the chairperson of the board, respective department vice chairperson, or committee chairperson.

Section 3: Quorums

At any duly called general meeting of the Business Alliance, (number) percent of) members shall constitute a quorum; at a board meeting of directors present shall constitute a quorum; at committee meetings a majority shall constitute a quorum except when a committee consists of more than nine members. In that case, five shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4: Notices, Agendas, Minutes

Written notice of all Business Alliance meetings must be given at least _____ days in advance unless otherwise stated. An advance agenda and minutes must be prepared for all meetings; a detailed outline for procedures of both documents shall be part of this organization's procedures manual.

Article IV: Board of Directors

Section 1: Composition of the Board

The board of directors shall be composed of (number) members, (number) of whom shall be

government and policymaking responsibilities of the Business Alliance be vested in the board of directors, which shall control its property, be responsible for its finances, and direct its affairs.

Section 2: Selection and Election of Directors (See last page for sample table.)

Nominating Committee. At the regular (*month*) board meeting, the chairperson of the board shall appoint, subject to approval by the board of directors, a nominating committee of (*number*) members of the Business Alliance. The chairperson of the board shall designate the chairperson of the nominating committee.

On (*date*), the nominating committee shall present to the president a slate of (*number of vacancies*) candidates to serve 3-year terms to replace the directors whose regular terms are expiring. Each candidate must be an active member in good standing and must have agreed to accept the responsibility of directorship. No board member who has served two consecutive 3-year terms is eligible for election for a third term. A period of 1 year must elapse after a term expires before eligibility is restored.

Publicity of Nominations. Upon receipt of the report of the nominating committee, the president shall immediately notify the membership by mail of the names of persons nominated as candidates for directors and the right of nomination.

Nominations by Petition. Additional names of candidates for directors may be nominated by petition bearing the genuine signatures of at least (*number*) qualified members of the Business Alliance. Such petition shall be submitted to the nominating committee no more than 10 days after notice has been given of the names of those nominated. The determination of the nominating committee as to the legality of the petition(s) shall be final.

Termination. If no petition is filed within the designated period, the nominations shall be closed and the nominated slate of (*number of vacancies*) candidates shall be declared elected by the board of directors at their regular (*month*) board meeting.

On the day of the regular board meeting, the names of all candidates shall be arranged on a ballot in alphabetical order. Instructions will be given for (*number of vacancies*) candidates only. The president shall mail the ballot to all active members at least 15 days before the regular (*month*) board meeting.

The ballots shall be marked in accordance with instructions printed on the ballot and returned to the Business Alliance office within 10 days. The board of directors shall, at its regular (*month*) board meeting, declare the (*number*)

election; one will be designated chairperson. Such judges shall have supervision of the election, including the auditing of the ballots, and report the results of the election to the board of directors.

Section 3: Seating of New Directors

All newly elected and appointed board members shall be seated at the next regular (*month*) board meeting and shall be participating members. Retiring directors shall continue to serve until the end of the program.

Section 4: Vacancies

A member of the board of directors who shall be absent from three consecutive regular meetings of the board of directors shall automatically be removed from membership on the board unless confined by illness or other cause approved by a majority vote of those voting at any meeting thereafter.

Vacancies on the board of directors, or among the officers, shall be filled by the board of directors by a majority vote.

Section 5: Policy (statements of position on issues)

The board of directors is responsible for establishing procedure and policy of the organization. It is also responsible for adopting all policies of the organization. These policies shall be maintained in a policy manual and reviewed annually and revised as necessary.

Section 6: Management

The board of directors shall employ a president (or appropriate title) and fix the salary and other considerations of employment.

Section 7: Indemnification

The Business Alliance may, by resolution of the board of directors, provide for indemnification by the Alliance of any and all current or former directors, and employees against expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in connection with the defense of any action, suit, or proceeding in which they or any of them are made parties, or a party, by reason of having been officers, directors, or employees of the Alliance, except in relation to matters as to which such individuals shall be adjudged in such action or proceeding to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of their duty and to such matters as shall be settled by agreement predicated upon the existence of such liability for negligence or misconduct.

Article V: Officers

Section 1: Determination of Officers

necessary to conduct the activities of the Alliance, and the treasurer. They shall be elected from members¹ of the new board. All electees shall begin their term on the first day of the new fiscal year and serve for a term of 1 year until their successors assume the duties of office. They shall be voting members of the board of directors.

Duties of Officers

Chairperson of the Board. The chairperson shall serve as the chief executive officer of the Business Alliance and shall preside at all meetings of the board, board of directors, and executive committee.

The chairperson of the board shall, with the advice and counsel of the president and vice chairperson(s) to divisional or departmental responsibility, require the approval by the board of directors.

The chairperson of the board shall, with advice and counsel of vice chairperson and president, determine all committees, select all committee chairpersons, and assist in the selection of committee personnel, subject to approval by the board of directors.

Chairperson-elect. The chairperson-elect shall exercise the powers and perform the duties of the chairperson in the absence or disability of the chairperson. The chairperson-elect shall also serve as head of the Work Committee of the Business Alliance. As such, the chairperson and committee will be responsible for determining that the program of the Alliance are of such duration as is required, at all times being aware that the activities of the Alliance are directed toward achieving and community needs in the area served by the Alliance.

Vice Chairperson. The duties of the vice chairperson shall be such as may be determined by general usage would indicate, and such as required by law, as well as those that may be assigned by the chairperson and board of directors. The vice chairperson also have under their immediate jurisdiction all committees pertaining to the general duties.

Treasurer. The treasurer shall be responsible for the safeguarding of all funds received by the Alliance and for their proper disbursement. Such funds shall be kept on deposit in financial institutions or invested in a manner approved by the board of directors. Checks are to be signed by the treasurer or president or, in the absence of the treasurer, the president, or both, and the officers. The treasurer shall submit a monthly financial report to the board of directors.

President (or preferred title). The president shall be the chief administrative officer. The president shall serve as secretary to the board of directors and shall submit notices, agendas, and minutes of board meetings.

The president shall be a member of the board of directors, the Executive Committee, and all committees.

With assistance of the divisional vice chairperson, the president shall be responsible for administration of the program of work in accordance with the policies and regulations of the board of directors.

The president shall be responsible for hiring, discharging, directing, and supervising all employees.

With the cooperation of the Program of Work Committee and Budget Committee, the president shall be responsible for the preparation of a budget covering all activities of the Alliance, subject to approval by the board of directors. The president shall also be responsible for all expenditures within approved budget allocations.

Section 3: Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall act for and on behalf of the board of directors when the board is not in session but shall be accountable to the board for its actions. It shall be composed of the chairperson of the board, past chairperson, chairperson-elect, vice chairperson, treasurer, and president. The chairperson of the board will serve as chairperson of the Executive Committee.

Section 4: Indemnification

The Alliance may, by resolution of the board of directors, provide indemnification by the Alliance of any and all of its officers or former officers as spelled out in Article IV, Section 7 of these bylaws.

Article VI: Committee and Divisions

Section 1: Appointment and Authority

The chairperson of the board, by and with the approval of the board of directors, shall appoint all committees and committee chairpersons. The chairperson of the board may also appoint such ad hoc committees and committee chairpersons as deemed necessary to carry out the program of the Alliance. Committee appointments shall be at the will and pleasure of the board of the board and shall serve concurrent with the term of the appointing chairperson of the board, unless a different term is approved by the board of directors.

It shall be the function of committees to make investigations, conduct inquiries, and hearings, make recommendations to the board of directors, and perform other activities as delegated to them by the board.

Section 2: Limitation of Authority

ees shall be discharged by the chairperson of the board when their reports have been completed and their reports accepted or when, in the opinion of the board of directors, it is deemed wise to discontinue the committees.

3: Testimony

When committee action has been approved by the board of directors, it shall be incumbent upon the committee chairpersons or, in their absence, whom the board shall designate as familiar enough with the issue, to give testimony to or make presentations before civic and governmental agencies.

4: Divisions

The board of directors may create such divisions, bureaus, departments, councils, or subsidiary corporations as it deems advisable to handle the work of the Alliance.

The board shall authorize and define the powers and duties of all divisions, bureaus, departments, councils, and subsidiary corporations. The board shall review and approve all activities and proposed programs of such divisions, bureaus, departments, councils, or subsidiary corporations, including the collection and disbursement of funds.

Without approval by the board of directors, no action or resolution of any kind that bears on or is expressive of the Alliance shall be taken by divisions, bureaus, departments, councils, or subsidiary corporations.

Part VII: Finances

1: Funds

All money paid to the Alliance shall be placed in a general operating fund. Money received from the current year's budget will be placed in a reserve fund.

2: Disbursements

After approval of the budget, the president is authorized to make disbursements from the Alliance accounts and expenses provided for in the budget without additional approval of the board of directors. Disbursement shall be by check.

3: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Alliance shall close on **(date)**.

4: Budget

As soon as possible after election of the new board of directors and officers,

Section 5: Annual Audit

The accounts of the Business Alliance shall be audited annually as of the close of business on (*date ending fiscal year*) by a public accountant. The audit shall be available at all times in the offices of the Alliance to members of the organization.

Section 6: Bonding

The president and such officers and staff as the board of directors may designate shall be bonded by a sufficient fidelity bond in the amount set by the board and paid for by the Alliance.

Article VIII: Dissolution

Section 1: Procedure

The Alliance shall use its funds only to accomplish the objectives and purposes specified in these bylaws, and no part of said funds shall inure to the benefit of any individual member. On dissolution of the Alliance, the funds remaining shall be distributed to one or more regularly organized, qualified charitable, educational, scientific, or philanthropic organizations to be selected by the board of directors as defined in IRS Section 501(c)(3).

Article IX: Parliamentary Authority

The current edition of Roberts Rules of Order shall be the final source of authority in all questions of parliamentary procedures when such rules are not inconsistent with the charter or bylaws of the Alliance.

Article X: Amendments

Section 1: Revisions

These bylaws may be amended or altered by a two-thirds vote of the board of directors or by a majority of the members at any regular or special meeting, provided that the notice for the meeting includes the proposals for amendments. Any proposed amendments or alterations shall be submitted to the board or the members in writing at least 10 days before the meeting at which they are to be acted upon.

Opted: _____ (date)

ended: _____ (date)

Schedule for Single-Slate Election and Orientation of Officers and Directors

The following timeline is designed for an organization with a fiscal year beginning in January and concluding in December. Times can be adapted to requirements of any organization.

An Alliance prefers a double-slate election procedure, the same timeline can be used, with "one candidate per vacancy" replaced by the phrase "two candidates per vacancy."

Lead Time	Month Before New Board Takes Office	Action To Be Taken
6 months	August	Chairperson of the board appoints Nominating Committee with board's approval at regularly scheduled board meeting. (Article IV, Section 2A)
5 months	September	Nominating Committee presents (single slate) to directors. (Article IV, Section 2A) Immediate notice of slate is given to the membership and right of petition explained. Petitions must be received within 10 days of notice. (Article IV, Section 2B and C)
4 months	October	Elect directors at regularly scheduled board meeting. (Article IV, Section 2D)
3 months	November	Elect officers at regularly scheduled board meeting (combination of old and new board). (Article IV, Section 3 and Article V, Section 1)
2 months	December	Orient new officers and directors; plan new program of work; appoint and orient new committee chairperson, committee members, and other action groups; plan budget.
1 month	January	New officers and board of directors take office; committees and other action groups begin work.

Winter Park Chamber of Commerce Business Alliance Program

Adopt-A-Business

led by the Minority Business Committee of the Winter Park (Florida) Chamber of Commerce, the "Adopt-A-Business" program assists in developing minority-owned businesses.

Adopt-A-Business responds to concerns voiced by the Minority Business Committee and to the results of a study conducted by Hanson Taylor, an interior design company, which showed that economic development in the Winter Park minority community of Westside had not pace with development in the rest of the city.

The Adopt-A-Business program has served as a model program for many cities and Chambers of Commerce throughout the United States. It encourages the development of minority businesses by providing a unique mentorship relationship between larger, well-established businesses assisting—or "adopting"—small minority-owned businesses, leading to business relationships between them.

How It Works

Minority business applicants participate in a year-long program with their mentor businesses, receiving help in identifying specific areas of weakness in their business plans. This knowledge, in turn, helps the applicants form Adopt-A-Business program objectives. Prospective entrepreneurs are matched with sponsoring companies that will help them implement their

Winter Park Chamber has outlined the following 15 steps for creating successful mentoring relationships.

Creation of an Adopt-A-Business program package to be available when requested by interested parties.

- ☐ If not a member of the Chamber, a minority owner should be informed of the need to become a member to participate in a program.
- ☐ If a member of the Chamber, a minority owner should be recruited to join the Alliance committee on minority business. Goals and objectives of the committee should be explained.
- Arrangement of a 30-minute orientation to:
 - ☐ Further explain the Adopt-A-Business program and provide a program package.
 - ☐ Confirm that adoptee and sponsor should meet at a minimum one month.
 - ☐ Discuss goals and objectives of the program and the role of participants (minority business entrepreneur, sponsor, and adviser).
 - ☐ Discuss the goals, objectives, and strengths of (as well as the challenges facing) the minority business entrepreneur.
- Agreement of both the adviser and the minority business entrepreneur on the best type of sponsor.
- Identification by the minority business owner of three companies which they would like to be matched and that are members of the Chamber. (Choice of company sponsor should be chosen on the basis of analysis from the 30-minute orientation described above and then ranked from first to third.)
- Contact with prospective sponsors in ranking order by the Alliance (minority business) coordinator and completion of the next step when a choice commits to the program.
- Contact with a potential sponsor and reiteration of issues discussed in orientation; arrangement of appointment to meet with potential sponsor if desired by that sponsor (otherwise, mailing of the Adopt-A-Business program packages); request that a potential sponsor contact the coordinator with further questions upon receipt and review of the program package.
- Informing a sponsor of the name and type (industry) of company to be adopted.
- To solidify sponsor commitment to participate, followup with potential sponsor within 7 days of the date of mailing and/or faxing the program package.
- Contact with the minority business entrepreneur after a sponsor is identified, suggesting contact with the sponsor to make an appointment to build rapport as well as discuss goals and objectives.

terly meeting of all program participants in an informal social setting
port on the progress of each match.

ting of a certificate of recognition and appreciation to participants at
end of the year.

Individual Roles

adopt-A-Business program, the minority business entrepreneur devel-
business plan, reacts to recommendations made by the adviser and the
, meets regularly with the sponsor, is dedicated to the growth of
s and to the success of the program, assists other minority companies
development, and encourages business dealings between involved
nies and other minority companies.

ponsor in the Adopt-A-Business program assists the entrepreneurs in
ping an aggressive plan of action and in overcoming identified prob-
as, encourages business opportunities with sponsors and MBE's, and
to the adviser any concerns and recommendations.

opt-A-Business adviser serves as a support base for sponsor and
eneur, assists in educating the corporate sponsor on the positive
the program makes in the community, ensures that the minority
s entrepreneur follows through on recommendations by the adopting
y, encourages regular meetings between the adopting company and
ority business entrepreneur, reports on the progress of the adoption,
responsible for periodic and final evaluations.

Sample Adopt-A-Business Application

ADOPT A BUSINESS

- ☐ Yes! I'm interested in becoming involved in the
Adopt-A-Business program as a
☐ Sponsor. ☐ Adoptee.
☐ I would like more information.

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Minority Access Partnership Program (MAPP)

Purpose

The Minority Access Partnership Program (MAPP) is a self-help initiative for minority entrepreneurs willing to invest their own time and money to strengthen their businesses. The Winter Park (Florida) Chamber of Commerce Minority Access Program is designed to accomplish two objectives:

- To challenge minority business owners to become personally involved in the Winter Park Chamber and the many programs and services it offers to emerging businesses.
- To challenge financial institutions to go that "extra step" to provide funds for sponsoring minority businesses on a matching basis, to make memberships in the Chamber of Commerce affordable.

Background

The Winter Park Chamber of Commerce recognized that many minority businesses in the community stood to gain substantial benefits from membership in the Chamber. Unfortunately, these businesses were often among the least able to afford the cost of joining the organization. MAPP was designed as a pilot program to improve access to the educational resources, business expertise, and networking activities of the Chamber for small minority-owned businesses.

MAPP provides matching funds for a limited number of minority-owned businesses, individuals, or both to help underwrite the cost of membership in the Winter Park Chamber. Eligibility for participation is established through business ownership by or personal interest of any ethnic minority.

The Winter Park Chamber of Commerce believes that the success of the local business community depends on full participation in the Chamber by members from all sectors of the economy. The Chamber views MAPP as a positive action that will increase opportunities for minority-owned firms to participate

Sample Invitation Letter for Winter Park MAPP Sponsors

Dear Colleague:

The Winter Park Chamber of Commerce has made a commitment to minority businesses in the Central Florida area by establishing a minority business committee that specifically focuses on meeting the special needs of the minority community.

The Winter Park Chamber of Commerce has created an initiative called the Minority Access Partnership Program (MAPP), which enables banking institutions to fulfill the requirements of the Minority Reinvestment Act through the partial underwriting of Chamber memberships for ethnic minority businesses.

Through this initiative, you will be providing educational resources, business expertise, and networking opportunities to those who have the most to gain. Your financial commitment will consist of pledging \$95 per sponsorship to ethnic-owned or ethnic-managed businesses with fewer than 10 employees.

The enclosed materials will further explain the Winter Park Chamber of Commerce MAPP. After you have reviewed these materials, you will certainly want to join us in sponsoring MAPP. By return letter, you can let me know how many minority businesses you wish to sponsor.

For additional information, contact Minority Business Coordinator Carolyn Winston at the telephone or fax number printed on this letterhead below.

Cordially,

Don Dalton
Executive Vice President

encl.

P.S. Enclosed you will also find a list of minority businesses sponsored by participating financial institutions

Sample Cocoa Area Business Alliance Fact Sheet

FACT SHEET

The main goal of the Cocoa Area Business Alliance (CABA), a committee of the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, is to increase business and job opportunities—vital elements of the economic health and quality of life in Cocoa. The problems that block dynamic economic growth can be overcome when those who live and work in the community become involved in the decisionmaking process.

The following information should be helpful to prospective new CABA members:

- ▶ Any business in the Cocoa area may join the Alliance—it need not be a member of the Chamber of Commerce.
- ▶ Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:30 a.m. at The Dixie Restaurant, US1, Cocoa.
- ▶ Upon joining CABA, some member businesses with five or fewer employees will be offered honorary 1-year Chamber memberships. (Chamber dues for a business with five employees are \$224. Honorary members are subject to approval by the SBIC and Chamber boards.)

As the organized voice of concerned and involved business owners in Cocoa, CABA can send strong messages to various governmental agencies—

- ▶ To increase crime prevention programs.
- ▶ To clean up and landscape the streets in and around the city.
- ▶ To actively help—not hinder—businesses that want to locate in the Cocoa area.

The bottom line is that more businesses in the Cocoa area add to the tax base, create a thriving economic climate, and generate more jobs. More jobs, in turn, lead to fewer drugs, less crime, and an improved quality of life for the entire community. Everyone, however, must become involved: No “them” or “they” will take on this responsibility.

Sample Cocoa Area Business Alliance Membership Form

COCOA AREA BUSINESS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME: _____

COMPANY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

Check the committees on which you would like to work:

- ☐ Beautification
- ☐ Law Enforcement
- ☐ Economic Development
- ☐ Youth Education
- ☐ Legislative Affairs
- ☐ Junior Olympics
- ☐ Publicity
- ☐ Membership

Sample Cocoa Area Business Alliance Action Reports

Cocoa Area Business Alliance

of the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce

Action Report

Business Development

- The Cocoa Area Business Alliance (CABA) supports the development of the old downtown library into a Meeting/Convention Center.
- CABA supports ordinances that encourage business expansion and job creation in the Cocoa area.
- CABA will furnish volunteers for the AAU Junior Olympics and work with the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber to ensure the success of this international event.
- CABA supports networking and cooperation among businesses in the Cocoa area.

Beautification

- CABA supported the acquisition of State DOT enhancement funds to beautify SR520.
- CABA supports cleaning up and maintaining SR520 from I-95 through the City of Cocoa prior to the AAU Junior Olympics so our community will present a pleasing image to national and international visitors.

Crime Prevention

- CABA supported the addition of more patrol officers and more equipment for the Cocoa Police Department.
- CABA feels that cooperation and understanding between the business

Cocoa Area Business Alliance *of the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce*

Action Report

The Cocoa Area Business Alliance (CABA), a committee of the Cocoa Beach Chamber of Commerce, is a union of business owners who work together to promote beautification, better law enforcement, and economic development in the Cocoa Beach area. The group had its first general membership meeting on January 27, 1993. In the short time since it was formed, CABA has compiled an impressive list of achievements.

Beautification

The Beautification Committee, chaired by Danny Batchelor (Batchelor Photography), worked with officials from the City of Cocoa Beach and Brevard County to have SR520 designated by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) a top priority for receipt of State Department of Transportation Enhancement Funds. The Business Alliance sponsored a petition drive, and members wrote letters to MPO in support of the project. Work on beautifying the median of the road is expected to start in early 1994.

Law Enforcement

The Crime Committee, under the leadership of John Condon (Toppertown), established an outstanding rapport with the Cocoa Police Department, which worked closely with CABA and with individual member businesses to reduce crime in Cocoa. The Business Alliance learned that the police were understaffed and could place only four to six patrol officers in the field on an average Saturday night. In addition, The Cocoa Police Department was the only department in Brevard County that was not on the 800-meg radio system; this meant that officers could not talk to officers from other departments who might arrive to assist in an emergency. Despite these problems, the Cocoa City Council voted to reduce the police department budget by 5 percent. CABA voted to oppose the reduction in police department funding and instead called for an increase to cover the addition of more patrol officers and the 800-meg radio system. Alliance members called council members, circulated petitions, and attended budget council meetings to urge the council to help make the streets of Cocoa safer for residents as well as businesses. The Cocoa City Council responded to these concerns by rescinding the 5-percent cut, adding funds for three patrol officers and the 800-meg radio system to the budget.

(continued)

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Economic Development

Economic Development Chair Phyllis Churchill (Answerphone) has started several initiatives. The Alliance has voted to support the transformation of the city library into a meeting and convention center. Business Alliance members also have access to wide range of Chamber-sponsored activities—including the Small Business & Industry Council, SCORE counseling, a reference library for contracts and available funding, and networking opportunities—to help promote economic development and expansion.

Working Opportunities

Under the stewardship of Ed Jones (Afro City Unisex Salon), membership in CABA has increased to 90 members and continues to grow. These Cocoa area businesses have the opportunity to regularly network with each other at CABA general membership meetings and committee functions. In addition, they can work with the full Chamber membership of 1,600 at Chamber functions.

Educational Opportunities

Business Alliance offers its members many opportunities to increase their knowledge of issues vital to businesses. Programs and workshops in recent months have included "Small Business Financing," "How To Prevent Crime in Your Workplace," "Managing the Multicultural Workplace," "Grant Writing," "How To Take Advantage of the State Enterprise Zone," and "Drug-Free Workplaces."

How To Join

Please fill out a membership form at one of our general membership meetings that take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 8:15 a.m. at the CABA Restaurant on US1. For more information, call the CABA voice-mail system (donated by Answerphone) at 633-9503; or Lynn Pickett at the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 459-2200.

Sample Cocoa Area Business Alliance Report to Members

Cocoa Area Business Alliance of the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce

Report to Members

October General Membership Meeting

Two Special Announcements

Special membership offer from the Chamber. Bill Taylor (Barnett Bank), incoming chairman of the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, outlined a special membership package for new Cocoa Area Business Alliance (CABA) members at the general membership meeting held October 13 at the Dixie Restaurant in Cocoa; the plan was ratified by the Chamber board Wednesday evening:

Any business in the Cocoa area may join the Alliance—it need not be a member of the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce.

After joining CABA, some member businesses with five or fewer employees will be offered honorary 1-year Chamber memberships. (Chamber dues for a business with five employees are \$224.)

Honorary members will receive special invitations to—

- A Wednesday/Friendsday (for two) (a \$10 value).
- A Chamber luncheon (for two) (a \$14 value).
- An SBIC program (for two) (a value worth up to \$40).

Current or past Chamber members cannot participate unless they receive special approval from the SBIC executive board.

Bill explained that the Chamber was trying to reach out to those businesses that cannot afford Chamber dues. Sue Munsey, Chamber president, said that the honorary members should be approved by the CABA board and be encouraged to attend a Chamber orientation so that they could take full advantage of the offer.

Meeting date changed. Alliance members voted to change the general Cocoa Area

Other News

Election of 1994 Officers. Officers for next year will be elected at the November 9 meeting. The nominating committee is composed of Phyllis Churchill (Answerphone), Jim Mathusa (ASAP Printing), and George Vanderhall (Chocolate Honeycomb). If you wish to make nominations, please call our voice-mail, 633-9503, before October 30. Only those people who agree to serve as officers will be placed on the slate.

Crime Summit. John Condon (Toppertown), chairman of the Law Enforcement Committee; Ben Serauge (Donut King); and Samuel and Irene Demps (Demps Christian Child Care) were invited by the U.S. Attorney to attend the Crime Summit in Tampa last month to express business views on how to alleviate the crime problem. John reported that the U.S. Department of Justice is stressing drug prevention as a means to reduce crime. "They said that they need community involvement to make it work," John said, "and we're the community."

Legislative Affairs. Vice president James Philippeaux (Barnett Bank) flew to Washington, D.C., recently to talk to members of Congress in support of "The Community Development, Credit Enhancement and Regulatory Improvement Act 1993 (S.1275)." The bill, as reported out of committee, would allow banks to participate through their community development corporations (CDC's) and loan institutions (CDFI's), as long as the CDC's are not wholly owned by a single institution. The bill would also make it easier for small businesses to secure loans by changing the regulations on loan insurance.

Cocoa City Manager. Steve Bonczek, new city manager, talked to the group about the needs of the city. "Our image needs some work," he said. "We get sympathy, but not a lot of respect." He encouraged Alliance members to begin attending City Council meetings and expressing their views. The land development regulations are under review and will come to the Council soon. Steve expressed his opinion that some of the current standards are too lax and need revision. He also feels that the city needs a new city hall and a new police station: "A new city hall on SR520 or US1 would say a lot about how we feel about our city." He added that taxes have not been raised in 5 years and that a recent 5-percent budget cut might affect the delivery of services.

"Cocoa is one of the most fiscally conservative communities I've ever seen," he said, although the City of Cocoa is in outstanding financial health, with a 30-percent reserve of \$3 million (the average for cities is a 5-percent reserve). Steve said investing some of the reserve money in the future of Cocoa would be a wise use of funds. He also reported on talks with the editor of Florida Today regarding better coverage of Cocoa news. John Condon has been working to get the newspaper to begin printing a section on Cocoa similar to the section on Rockledge in The Tribune weekly supplement. Members who currently advertise in Florida Today are asked to contact John to see how they can help get this Cocoa section started.

Business Alliance Decals. If you do not already have your Cocoa Area Business Alliance decal for display at your business, call Lynn Pickett at the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. 459-2200.

For More Information

BJA has a range of publications related to law enforcement-community partnerships, including:

- *Problem-Oriented Drug Enforcement: A Community-Based Approach for Effective Policing*, NCJ 143710.
- *The Systems Approach to Crime and Drug Prevention: A Path to Community Policing*, NCJ 143712.
- *Understanding Community Policing: A Framework for Action*, NCJ 148457.
- *Neighborhood-Oriented Policing in Rural Communities: A Planning Guide*, NCJ 143709.
- *A Police Guide to Surveying Citizens and Their Environment*, NCJ 143711.
- *National Service and Public Safety: Partnerships for Safer Communities*, NCJ 146842.
- *Working as Partners With Community Groups*, NCJ 148458.
- *Partnerships to Prevent Youth Violence*, NCJ 148459.
- *An Introduction to DARE: Drug Abuse Resistance Education*, NCJ 129862.
- *An Introduction to the National DARE Parent Program*, NCJ 142422.

Call the BJA Clearinghouse at 800-688-4252